



Coronavirus: Museums, Galleries and Historic Buildings QSD on 21 May 2020

On 21 May 2020, Lord Cormack (Conservative) is due to ask Her Majesty's Government "what steps they are taking to support (1) museums, (2) galleries, and (3) historic buildings open to the public, affected by the restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic".

In March 2020, the Government announced a nationwide lockdown to stop the spread of coronavirus. This included the closure of tourism sites, such as museums, galleries and historic buildings. In response to the pandemic, the Government introduced several measures to support businesses retain employees and to help businesses with their income. These include:

- museums and art galleries with a rateable value below £51,000 [paying no business rates](#) over the next financial year;
- the [coronavirus job retention scheme](#), which allows employers to apply for a grant that covers 80 percent of an employee's monthly wage (up to £2,500 a month);
- the [coronavirus business interruption loan](#), which helps small and medium-sized businesses access loans of up to £5 million. However, museums run by public bodies are not eligible for the loan;
- the [coronavirus large business interruption loan scheme](#), which helps businesses with an annual turnover of more than £45 million apply for loans of up to £25 million; and
- the [bounce back loan scheme](#), allowing small businesses to apply for loans up to £50,000.

On 5 May 2020, the parliamentary under secretary at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Nigel Huddleston, [stated](#) that the Government had held "multiple recent discussions" with tourism businesses on developing guidance to help facilitate the re-opening of businesses. However, the Government would "continue to be guided by the latest medical advice". Further, on 11 May 2020, the Government published its [Covid-19 recovery strategy](#). In the strategy, the Government stated that its ambition was to open some leisure venues no earlier than 4 July 2020.

In addition to the Government's measures, the National Lottery Heritage Fund recently [announced](#) a £50 million emergency fund for UK heritage organisations affected by the pandemic. Similarly, Arts Council England have made [£160 million available](#) for organisations and individuals in the cultural sector that have been impacted.

Eren Waitzman | 14 May 2020

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Further information

- HM Treasury, '[Financial support for businesses during coronavirus \(Covid-19\)](#)', updated 27 April 2020; and '[Support for those affected by Covid-19](#)', updated 9 April 2020

Details on the financial support available for businesses impacted by the pandemic; and guidance for individuals and businesses that may be experiencing financial difficulty as a result of Covid-19. This includes information on the coronavirus business interruption loan scheme.

- House of Commons, '[Written Question: Tourism—Coronavirus](#)', 5 May 2020, 42206

Written question asking what recent discussions the Government has had with tourism businesses on developing guidance to help the re-opening of those businesses. In its response, the Government stated that it had held multiple discussions with senior leaders from across the tourism industry and that it was “collating evidence” from tourism businesses across the country on the potential impact of any changes to the current measures.

- National Lottery Heritage Fund, '[Our support for the heritage sector in response to the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) crisis](#)', updated 15 April 2020

Details of the National Lottery Heritage Fund’s emergency fund to support the heritage sector in response to the pandemic. This includes grants of between £3,000 and £50,000 to help “stabilise organisations and manage unforeseen risks”.

- Arts Council England, '[Covid-19: more information](#)', 24 March 2020

Webpage summarising Arts Council England’s £160 million emergency response package to support individuals and organisations across the cultural sector that have been impacted by coronavirus. As part of the package: £90 million will be available to National Portfolio organisations (663 organisations designated by Arts Council England); £50 million for organisations outside of the National Portfolio; and £20 million to creative practitioners and cultural workers.

- Museums Association, '[Coronavirus: organisational and employment FAQs](#)', 25 March 2020

Article outlining the financial support available for museums and their employees. This includes frequently asked questions about museums run by a public body or those which are charitable organisations.

Parliamentary debate, statements and questions

- [Statement by the Leader of the House of Lords, Baroness Evans of Bowes Park, on 'Covid-19: Strategy'](#), HL Hansard, 12 May 2020, cols 658–76
- [Debate on the 'Charitable and Voluntary Sector'](#), HL Hansard, 30 April 2020, cols 285–328

- [Oral Question on 'Covid-19: Heritage and Tourism Sector'](#), HC Hansard, 27 April 2020, cols 104–6
- A selection of written questions from both Houses: [43676](#) (11 May 2020); [42980](#) (11 May 2020); [HL3244](#) (5 May 2020); and [37939](#) (28 April 2020); and [33532](#) (27 March 2020)

Press articles and comment

- Museums Association, '[Reopening the museum sector: a statement from the Museums Association](#)', 4 May 2020
- Darren Henley, '[The end of the beginning](#)', Arts Council England, 1 May 2020
- Alistair Sooke, '[It is time to reopen our galleries and museums](#)', *Telegraph* (£), 1 May 2020
- Tim Stokes, '[Coronavirus: museums 'will not survive' virus lockdown](#)', BBC News, 15 April 2020
- Ewan Somerville, '[British heritage could be 'lost forever' after coronavirus pandemic, Historic England warns](#)', *Evening Standard*, 17 April 2020
- Mark Brown, '[Over 100 MPs and peers in call to back creative industries in lockdown](#)', *Guardian*, 14 April 2020